

Discusses WIPP Development and Announces Blue Ribbon Commission Visit

Washington D.C. – This week, Harry Teague hosted two meetings with representatives from Carlsbad at his Washington, DC office. The discussions focused on ensuring the availability and long-term expansion of jobs at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) facility, as well as other economic development priorities for the city, including the CEHMM. Additionally, during the meeting Teague announced plans for the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future to visit the WIPP facility in January.

“The WIPP facility in Carlsbad is a leading example of the type of job creation and economic development that can come from energy initiatives here in America. I’ve been an advocate of WIPP for a long time because it not only provides many of the best job opportunities in our area, but the work that it does is essential to the country,” Harry Teague said. “It is crucial that we continue to support WIPP to create much-needed jobs in New Mexico and spur growth in Carlsbad’s economy. I look forward to the opportunity to highlight the importance of WIPP – in both the Carlsbad and nuclear energy community – during the Blue Ribbon Commission’s visit and hearing their feedback.”

Attendees included New Mexico State Representative John Heaton, Mayor Dale Janway, and former Mayor Bob Forrest, as well as Tom Martin, David Kessel and John Waters of the Carlsbad Department of Economic Development.

Last week, the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, charged with analyzing and providing insight on the managing the nation's nuclear waste and used nuclear fuel, announced its plans to visit the WIPP facility in early 2011.

"In January of next year, we will arrange visits to southeastern New Mexico to visit the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant and to Georgia and South Carolina to learn more about the Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant and the Savannah River Site," said General Brent Scowcroft, Chairman of the Blue Ribbon Commission. "As we have said before, we believe it is important for the Commission to hear from communities that have a large stake in solving the waste problems...We look forward to these visits."

Last year, Harry Teague fought to add \$20 million in funding for the WIPP above the President's budget request, an initiative supported by local community leaders. The funding will go towards job preservation, improved environmental cleanup, and infrastructure improvement. Teague recently wrote to Representative Ed Pastor of Arizona asking him to include language on WIPP expansion in the Energy and Water appropriations committee. As of April 27, 2010, the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) and WIPP reported that it had saved and/or created more than 500 jobs through funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

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